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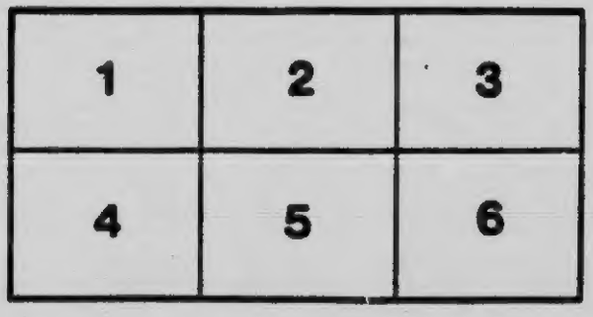

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Dominion Archivist
Ottawa
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Roma O'Hagan.

Windsor Ontario
May 23rd 1914

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A GATE OF FLOWERS

IN DREAMLAND

SONGS OF THE SETTLEMENT

STUDIES IN POETRY

CANADIAN ESSAYS

ESSAYS: LITERARY, CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL

CHATS BY THE FIRESIDE

In the Heart of the Meadow

And Other Poems

By
THOMAS
O'HAGAN

With Foreword by

Hon. Justice Longley, B.C.L., LL.D.

Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and
Judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia

TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS
1914

1914
(160)

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THOMAS O'HAGAN

TO

THE MEMORY

OF

My Mother

FOREWORD

THE age in which we live is a practical one and not gleaming with poetic fancies. In England to-day there are various poets, but none that could be placed in the rank of Tennyson, Byron or Browning. In the United States, amid the numbers who write poetry, there cannot be found any equal to Longfellow, Whittier, Bryant or Poe. Canadian poetry has been well sustained during the past twenty-five years by a Roberts, a Carman, a Campbell, a Scott, a Service, a Dr. Drummond, and many others, and though the population of the Republic to the south of us is ten times that of Canada it certainly has not to-day ten times as many inspired singers.

This volume, "In the Heart of the Meadow," is, I understand, Mr. O'Hagan's fourth published book of verse. Of the merits of the poems it is only necessary to say that while most of the poetry of our day seems to have buried itself in obscurity, Mr. O'Hagan's poems are easily understood and come freely from the thought and imagination. It is indeed a singular fact that while

one can read Shakespeare, Tennyson or Byron with perfect ease, and little difficulty is found in understanding their references and the meaning which they desire to convey, there exists the greatest difficulty in understanding many of the poets who write to-day. This comes, no doubt, from a confused idea that there must be some meaning suggested which it is possible for authors to find out but impossible for average readers to determine. Such deficiencies have caused many of the most impressive of modern poems to pass disregarded by multitudes of people, and will continue so until the end of time.

The meaning of Mr. O'Hagan's poems is beset with no darkness or obscurity. Indeed, his spirit and method seem to be well reflected in his poem, "Two Workers":

> "But he who builds for future time,
> Strong walls of faith and love sublime,
> Who domes with prayer his gift of toil,
> Whom neither fate nor foe can foil,
> Is doing work of godly part
> Within the kingdom of the heart,
> And wins him honor brighter far
> Than ray of light from heavenly star."

His first published poems were of this kind, and in the collection now issued they are essentially of this nature, and can be understood by any person of intelli-

gence who is fond of poetry and believes that it springs from the heart. Whatever be its fortune, Mr. Thomas O'Hagan's new volume takes its chances, and the best wishes of all will be that the immortality which we all so ardently crave may crown his efforts to endow mankind with sweetest and purest sentiments.

J. W. LONGLEY.

HALIFAX, N.S., March 6th, 1914.

PREFATORY NOTE

THE great body of the poems in this volume appear now in book form for the first time; the rest have been selected from my last published collection, "Songs of the Settlement."

T. O'H.

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IN THE HEART OF THE MEADOW.

In the heart of the meadow, where Love abides,
And rules his Court as a sceptred King,
Green-clad Knights, with dewdrop helmets,
Pledge their faith and roundly sing:
"Honor to him, our liege lord King,
Who rules the air and the land and the sea;
His throne rests not on the arms of Empire,
But the hearts of his subjects so true and free!"

In the heart of the meadow, where Love abides,
Are royal courts and royal halls,
And the gates are open and the bars descend not,
As the warders sing on the outer walls:
"Honor to him, our liege lord King,
Who rules the air and the land and the sea;
His throne rests not on the arms of Empire,
But the hearts of his subjects so true and free!"

In the heart of the meadow, where Love abides,
Time fills the hours with a magic glass;
For there is no dreaming and there is no seeming,
Where the world is singing and the King will pass:
"Honor to him, our liege lord King,
Who rules the air and the land and the sea;
His throne rests not on the arms of Empire,
But the hearts of his subjects so true and free!

GIOTTO'S CAMPANILE.

O PULAINE heart with voice attuned
To all the soul builds high,
Framing in notes of love divine
A drama of the sky,
Across the Arno's flowing tide
Thy notes chime on the air,
Deep as the mysteries of God
And tender as a prayer.

Here, where the Poet of Sorrows dwelt,
Whose altar Love had built,
And framed his morn in dreams so pure
That knew not stain nor guilt:
O *Vita Nuova!* Earthly Love
Then changed to Love Divine;
Transfigured at the wedding-feast,
Earth's grapes are heavenly wine.

Where cowl'd monk with soul of fire
  Struck vice athwart the face,
With God's anointed sword of truth
  That flashed with beams of grace.
O bitter days of war and strife!
  Heaven's ardor was too great;
The Empire of the earth held sway
  And sealed with saddest fate.

Methinks I hear from thy strong lips,
  O century-dower'd bell!
The story of the Whites and Blacks,
  As banners rose or fell:
Methinks I hear an epic voice,
  Full of God's love and power,
With accent of an Exile sad
  Speaking from out thy tower!

FLORENCE, ITALY, May 4th, 1904.

"FORSAN HAEC MEMINISSE JUVABIT."

TREASUR'D the volumes we've laid on the shelves,
As we've dusted the rooms of our years;
For the Past is a child we have petted and spoiled,
And crown'd with our love and our tears.
"Forsan haec meminisse juvabit."

Through the mists of the years, deep-toned as the meres,
We search for the pebbles long lost;
By the beach where we strayed, near the shrine where we prayed,
When the flowers of our years knew no frost.
"Forsan haec meminisse juvabit."

We watch for the sails which were filled with the gales
That blew from the Islands of Youth;
What splendor of bark as it shot thro' the dark
Towards the Lighthouse of Candor and Truth!
"Forsan haec meminisse juvabit."

And we dream of the days, thro' the mist and the haze,
With their etchings of life so divine;
True to heaven and earth, true to dawn-tide of birth,
With the impress of God in each line.
"Forsan haec meminisse juvabit."

THE TWILIGHT OF THE CROSS.

(A poem read at the dedication, on December 11th, 1902, of St. Anne's Memorial Church, Penetanguishene, Ontario, commemorative of the martyrdom of the Jesuit Fathers, Brebeuf and Lalemant.)

BUILD high to God, and not to fame
The shaft that marks a sainted name;
For fame is but the dust of earth—
A meteor blaze of sudden birth;
But faith hath root in heavenly things
And bears God's world upon its wings;
It fears not death nor Cæsar's frown—
Its test and truth a martyr's crown.

And so we build and bless to-day,
Here by this quiet, historic bay,
Where once Loyola's sons had trod,
A goodly temple to our God.

Well nigh three hundred years have sped
And sentinel'd the saintly dead,
Since from their homes, in sunny France,
From Norman vale, with its romance,
There came that strong, heroic band,
With cross of faith to bless our land;
Following God's finger through the wild
To snatch from death each savage child.

Their arms the breviary and the cross;
Aught else but faith they count as dross;
And kneeling, seek God's will on high,
Within St. Mary's on the Wye.

The seed of faith has blazed within—
The triumphs of the cross begin;
Where death and darkness filled the land,
The rays of truth showered from God's hand
Blot out the stain of sin and shame
And leave the perfume of God's name;
Through dark Huronia's forests wild
The savage chief becomes a child.

But Calvary and Thabor's height
Are linked in glorious beams of light,
As torch and stake and burning coal
Release from earth each martyr'd soul.

O great, strong souls of faith and love!
Captains of truth for God above!
Heroic priests of twilight days
Who pierc'd our forests, bless'd our bays;
Sons of Ignatius, Saint of God!
Faith's perfume followed where ye trod;
To-day we bless and dome with prayer
This Church Memorial, chaste and fair!

REVEREND ALBERT REINHART, O.P.

(*In Memoriam.*)

HEART of gold astirr'd with fire,
Tender as the soul of lyre,
  White-robed friend of many years!
Thou hast passed beyond our ken,
Left us toiling among men,
  With their hopes and joys and tears.

But the torch that lit thy way,
Turned the sable night to day,
  Still is burning as God's wand:
We shall grope and watch that light
Plucking darkness from the night,
  Till we touch thy kindly hand.

THE ALTAR OF OUR RACE.

Out of the mists of the centuries agone,
  Daughter of Nations, Earth's white-robed Child,
Kneeling, in grief, with your face to the sea,
  Telling your beads, with a sob so wild,
What was your dream thro' the years long flown,
  Nestling close to the altar of God?
Was it to sit at the table of kings
  Or build in faith from the lowly sod?

Scattered your exiles on every sea,
  Still they are kneeling in fervor and prayer,
Dreaming the dream that they dreamt of old
  'Neath a star-sown sky of a life of care:
For this is a gift that kings ne'er give;
  It cometh in daytime, it cometh at night;
'Tis a gift of God to the Irish race,
  Oh, hold it enshrined, this wondrous light!

March 17th, 1912.

RIPENED FRUIT.

I KNOW not what my heart has lost;
I cannot strike the chords of old;
The breath that charmed my morning life
Hath chilled each leaf within the wold.

The swallows twitter in the sky,
But bare the nest beneath the eaves;
The fledglings of my care are gone,
And left me but the rustling leaves.

And yet, I know my life hath strength,
And firmer hope and sweeter prayer,
For leaves that murmur on the ground
Have now for me a double care.

I see in them the hope of spring,
That erst did plan the autumn day;
I see in them each gift of man
Grow strong in years, then turn to clay.

RIPENED FRUIT

Not all is lost—the fruit remains
  That ripened through the summer's ray;
The nurslings of the nest are gone,
  Yet hear we still their warbling lay.

The glory of the summer sky
  May change to tints of autumn hue;
But faith that sheds its amber light
  Will lend our heaven a tender blue.

O altar of eternal youth!
  O faith that beckons from afar,
Give to our lives a blossomed fruit—
  Give to our morns an evening star!

A DREAMER.

Men call me dreamer—what care I?
The cradle of my heart is rocked;
I dwell in realms beyond the earth;
The gold I mint is never locked.

Men call me dreamer—this, forsooth,
Because I spurn each thing of dross,
And count the step that leads not up
A useless toil, a round of loss.

Men call me dreamer—nay, that word
Hath burned its way from age to age;
Its light shone o'er Judea's hills
And thrilled the heart of seer and sage.

Men call me dreamer—yet forget
The dreamer lives a thousand years,
While those whose hearts and hands knead clay
Live not beyond their dusty biers.

THE COLUMBUS MEMORIAL.

THE veil was drawn, and lo! to gaze of man
A new primeval world lay robed in dream;
Upon its brow a diadem of Truth
That flashed its rays athwart the glorious sun.
From mountain top to vale a choral song
Filled all the vaulted sky with loud acclaim;
Then found the heart of man a statelier home—
An Empire vast of mountain, sea and plain.

O Pilot of Mankind! O Christ-Bearer to our shores!
Thy mission was from God who holds all lands;
He stilled the tempest that thy barque might sail,
He filled thy heart with courage when Death lowered.
True Knight of God, thy followers to-day
Have vision, too, where God directs and leads;
To thee, O mighty Mariner! memorial here we raise—
A gift of love, of faith—a tribute unto Man!

WASHINGTON, D C., June 8th, 1912.

THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM.

The Christ-Child in the manger lay—
  The inns were full that night;
And o'er Judea's distant plains
  There streamed a wondrous light;
The shepherd 'mid his white-fleeced flock
  Gazed wistfully from afar,
And voices strange, angelic, sweet,
  Smote hearth and hill and star.

The Christ-Child in the manger lay—
  A Royal Throne of grace;
And Mary, Lily Maid of God,
  Found glory in His face;
For a King was born in Bethlehem—
  In Bethlehem of Judea,
Whose sceptr'd power of love and grace
  Should reach from sea to sea.

VESTIGIA RETRORSUM.

(A poem read at the Golden Jubilee of St. Michael's College, Toronto, Ontario, April 28th, 1903.)

GATHER we here to-night, O comrades dear,
To greet with love and joy this Golden Year!
We bring to crown thee, Alma Mater fond,
The flowers our hearts so long have held in bond.
For fifty years thy faith has led the way
And filled each night with splendor of the day;
For fifty years thy kind and gentle hand
Has led our wayward footsteps thro' the land.

Here then to-night we cluster round thy feet
And storm with love the old maternal seat,
Where Faith and Science shed their radiant light,
And Truth has reared for us an altar bright;
Students of long ago, grey-bearded boys,
With increment of love if not of noise,
We meet across the years that bind our brow,
Some captains, pilots, watchers on the prow.

What glorious vision ours! A Golden Jubilee
Spreads every sail that swells upon life's sea;
What ventures bold amid the stress and storm!
What gallant souls! How rare each beauteous form!
God's battleship is mann'd from stern to prow,
And faithful is each seaman to his vow.
Each cruiser knows full well the channel mined
And every season fraught with dangerous wind.

All this thy labor, Alma Mater dear,
Through every fortune of each ripening year;
In Church and State thy voice is wisdom's call
Ringing along Time's academic hall,
A trumpet blast, a summons to each soul,
To do the things of God—whate'er the goal.
Because of this thy work is truly great,
The season of thy fruitage never late.

But pause we here beside life's altar fire
To strike the chords of Memory's golden lyre;
It seems but yesterday 'neath murmuring pine
Enrolled we stood and drank thy classic wine;
It seems but yesterday, and yet how far
Between life's morning and its evening star;
Then saw we but the footlights on the stage,
Now dreams are turned to deeds on every page.

Vestigia retrorsum! Backward we trace
Thy altar-light, a guiding gift of grace;
Around thy shrine we kneel in faith and prayer
And greet thee, Alma Mater, ever fair;
And when God's love has filled thy lap with flowers.
And Truth and Duty builded well the hours,
May that great saint who triumphed in the fight
Record the names of those who joy to-night!

A DIRGE OF THE "SETTLEMENT."

THE wind sweeps through the forest aisles,
In requiem notes of grief and woe,
For the great, strong heart of the pioneer
Hushed in death as an oak laid low:
Chanting a dirge at every door—
Dirge for the Oak the Storm-King tore:
"Here at rest is our pioneer
In his little log cabin beside the rill—
The stream flows on, but his heart is still;
Here at rest is our pioneer,
Wake not his slumber with sorrow's tear!"

Where shall we bury the good, great man
Who toiled in the heart of the forest wild?
Out in the field that is writ with his name,
Lay him down as a dream-tired child:
"Here shall we bury our pioneer
In his little clay cabin beside the rill—
The stream flowing on, though his heart be still;
Here shall we bury our pioneer,
Break not his rest with sorrow's tear!"

What would ye build to his narrow fame
That knew not glory nor gift nor gain?
His life touched God in a simple way—
This be his column on Judgment Day:
"Till then shall slumber our pioneer
In his little clay cabin beside the rill—
The stream flowing on, though his heart be still:
Till then shall slumber our pioneer,
Break not his rest with sorrow's tear!"

A SONG OF CANADIAN RIVERS.

Flow on, noble rivers! flow on! flow on!
In your beauteous course to the sea;
Sweep on, noble rivers! sweep on! sweep on!
Bright emblems of true liberty!
Roll noiselessly on a tide of bright song,
Roll happily, grandly and free;
Sweep over each plain in silv'ry-tongued strain,
Sweep down to the deep-sounding sea!

Flow on, noble rivers! flow on! flow on!
Flow swiftly and smoothly and free;
Chant loudly and grand the notes of our land—
Fair Canada's true minstrelsy;
Roll joyously on, sweep proudly along
In mirthfullest accents of glee!
Flow on, noble rivers! flow on! flow on!
Flow down to the deep-sounding sea!

Flow on! sweep on! sweep on! flow on!
  In a measureless, mystical key;
Each note that you wake on streamlet and lake
  Will blend with the song of the sea;
Through labyrinth-clad dell, in dreamy-like spell,
  Where slumbers each sentinel tree!
Flow on, noble rivers! flow on! flow on!
  Flow down to the deep-sounding sea!

NOVEMBER.

Chill-clad, cold November,
  Autumn's drooping head;
Weeping skies, psalm-like sighs,
  Nature's cold, cold bed.

Dead leaves fall before me—
  Hopes of summer dreams;
Naked boughs, broken vows,
  Mirror'd in bright streams.

Tatter'd robes of glory,
  Trampled by the wind;
Faded rays, faded days,
  Floating through the mind.

Days of gloom and sadness,
  Hours of sacred care;
Lonely biers, bitter tears,
  Hearts in silent prayer.

A KNIGHT OF GOD.

(*In Memoriam.*)

God's finger touched thee
While yet thy years were young;
Thy ripened fruit of faith
On Life's tree hung.

In vigils watched thy heart
Thro' toil of every day;
A Knight of God supreme
Thou led'st the way.

Faith simple and secure
Thy torch and goal;
Beloved thy memory dear;
Peace to thy soul!

TWO WORKERS.

THE man who plants a seed of corn
And watches o'er it night and morn,
And prays the heavens for kindly cheer
To nurse its heart with dewy tear,
Is doing work of goodly part
Which gladdens hearth and home and mart,
And gives his name an honored place
Within the compass of his race.

But he who builds for future time
Strong walls of faith and love sublime,
Who domes with prayer his gift of toil,
Whom neither fate nor foe can foil,
Is doing work of godly part
Within the kingdom of the heart,
And wins him honor brighter far
Than ray of light from heavenly star!

"RESURREXIT SICUT DIXIT."

God's angel rolled the stone away,
  The sepulchre stood bare;
The lily of bright Easter morn
  Drooped as in silent prayer;
And lo! from out the heavens there spake
  A voice of faith and love,
"He is not here," the angel said,
  "Our Lord now dwells above."

God's angel rolled the stone away
  On that first Easter morn,
That we might rise from sin and shame,
  In Christ again be born.
This is the Easter of the soul
  Whose victory crowns the tomb—
That blossoms thro' the star-sown night,
  And lights the darkest gloom.

THE SONG MY MOTHER SINGS.

O SWEET unto my heart is the song my mother sings
As eventide is brooding on its dark and noiseless wings;
Every note is charged with memory—every memory bright with rays
Of the golden hours of promise in the lap of childhood's days;
The orchard blooms anew and each blossom scents the way,
And I feel again the breath of eve among the new-mown hay;
While through the halls of memory in happy notes there rings
All the life-joy of the past in the song my mother sings.

I have listened to the dreamy notes of Chopin and of Liszt,
As they dripp'd and droop'd about my heart and filled my eyes with mist;

I have wept strong tears of pathos 'neath the spell of
Verdi's power,
As I heard the tenor voice of grief from out the donjon
tower;
And Gounod's oratorios are full of notes sublime
That stir the heart with rapture thro' the sacred pulse
of time;
But all the music of the past and the wealth that
memory brings
Seem as nothing when I listen to the song my mother
sings.

It's a song of love and triumph, it's a song of toil and
care;
It is filled with chords of pathos and it's set in notes
of prayer;
It is bright with dreams and visions of the days that are
to be,
And as strong in faith's devotion as the heart-beat of
the sea;
It is linked in mystic measure to sweet voices from
above,
And is starr'd with ripest blessing thro' a mother's
sacred love;
Oh, sweet and strong and tender are the memories that
it brings,
As I list in joy and rapture to the song my mother sings.

THE BURIAL OF A POET.

Out of the heart of the roaring city
  Dark and rude with its moiling gain,
They bore the Dreamer who plann'd and fashion'd
  The white-winged Hopes of a teeming brain;
Spring was stirring with pulse and wonder
  The heart of Nature in forest and mead,
Linking the Hope that blossoms in heaven
  To the Builders of Morn, in the tiniest seed.

Under the skies of his white-robed childhood
  The robins were singing the carols of old;
But the Poet heard not the notes that trembled
  As they mingled in grief with the bell that toll'd:
The ritual of faith filled field and forest,
  As they buried the Poet, 'mid sobs and prayer,
Where the Altars of Morn are fragrant with incense,
  And the bright tents of God shine clear and fair.

RECONCILED.

I saw two nations clasping hands
  Whose hearts had been estranged for years;
The sun of peace upon each brow
  Dispell'd the darksome mist of tears.
Behind were centuries robed in night;
  Before the glorious dawn of day;
While every peak on Freedom's height
  Flashed back the light of heavenly ray.

O sister Isle! O Nation great!
  This day a victory hath been won
Far greater than the fame that speaks
  Through trumpets' tongue or lip of gun;
This day Peace weaves a garland bright
  And heals the bitter wound of time,
Turning the sword with cruel edge
  Into a harp of golden prime.

AT THE TOMB.

KNEEL, Christian soul, in silent prayer,
  Where flowers of faith bloom thro' the night;
Springing from our dead selves subdued
  They crown the soul with life and light:

Here at the Tomb, with Mary nigh,
  A Mother's love sustains our prayer;
We take our cross and climb the Heights,
  Nor feel its weight of toil and care.

Easter Sunday, 1912.

FACE TO FACE.

The years have ripened since that day,
And Time has garnered every leaf;
The sun strikes yet aslant the door
Its mingled beams of joy and grief;
The orchard tree whose kindly arms
Bent over you, while full of care,
Still flings its boughs athwart the path
Where oft you told your beads of prayer.

Face to face, your soul and mine
Drank in the joy a mother gives,
Born of the highest, holiest love
That stirs all life—in Heaven lives.
Face to face, our spirits, then,
Found rapture in the lowliest thing;
Our dreams were twined, our life was one,
We touched Heaven's shores on ardent wing.

Face to face, God's faith abides
  And links your soul in Heaven to mine;
Life's tabernacle holds our love,
  Sacred and sweet as chaliced wine;
Nor shadow drear, nor earth's dark pain,
  Can dim love set in Heaven's grace,
Till, in the splendor of God's noon,
  Our ripening love stands face to face.